Brussels, 13 June 2022

To: Employment and Social Affairs Ministers of EU Member States

Subject: Open letter calling for the development of a Social Imbalances Procedure

Dear Minister,

We have been facing consecutive social crises in recent years: the COVID-19 pandemic has increased social and health inequalities across Europe and Russia's invasion of Ukraine is now worsening the cost-of-living crisis due to energy and food price hikes. Both crises have impacted people in vulnerable situations, who already start out in a position of disadvantage and often experience multiple forms of discrimination.

The social impact of these crises is insufficiently monitored at EU level. In terms of monitoring, the impact is invisible for groups of people in vulnerable situations because indicators do not cover all their social realities. Gathered data must be broken down by gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and other characteristics to measure the impact of crises on various groups. Without this data we cannot adopt evidence-based policies that correspond to realities on the ground and improve people's lives.

Ahead of the June 2022 EPSCO meeting, we call on you to support work towards a Social Imbalances Procedure that complements and improves existing monitoring frameworks and indicators to help detect and address social imbalances through the European Semester process. This will help foster and direct social investment where it is most needed in these crucial times.

It must be part of a reform of the European Semester that leads to a better balance of macroeconomic, fiscal, environmental, employment and social priorities, removing existing power imbalances between priorities and the decision-makers who enact them. We call on the EPSCO and ECOFIN Councils to meet jointly to discuss how to build a more enabling EU socio-economic governance system through better EU fiscal rules and the reform of the European Semester.

Now is the time for the EU and Member States to act, demonstrating that they are committed to building a more resilient, socially just, and inclusive Europe that ensures a decent life for all.

Yours sincerely,

Alva Finn, Social Platform Secretary-General

Social Platform is the largest, leading network of European civil society organisations working for a more social Europe. We represent the interests of social civil society organisations and people in all their diversity, including those in the most vulnerable situations. We also represent social economy actors and not-for-profit social service providers who support millions of people in their day-to-day lives.

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